

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINGST 07018 071756Z

ACTION INT-05

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3274

INFO AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

UNCLAS KINGSTON 7018

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ETRD, SENV, CJ, JM

SUBJECT: CAYMAN TURTLE FARM LTD AND LISTING OF THE GREEN SEA

TURTLE AS A "THREATENED SPECIES"

REF (A) STATE 192363; (B) STATE 192364; (C) SAN JOSE 3302

(D) PARAMARIBO 1115

1. DURING RECENT VISIT OF ECON OFFICER TO CAYMAN ISLANDS CONSIDERABLE CONCERN WAS EXPRESSED BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND ESPECIALLY W.A. JOHNSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF CAYMAN TURTLE FARM LTD., REGARDING THE LIKELY IMPACT ON THE COMPANY, CAYMANIAN EXPORT EARNINGS, AND EMPLOYMENT SHOULD SEA TURTLE MARICULTURE OPERATIONS NOT BE GIVEN AN EXEMPTION FROM THE LISTING OF THE GREEN SEA TURTLE AS A "THREATENED SPECIES" AS WELL AS REGARDING THE BAN ON COMMERCIAL TRADING IN MARICULTURE TURTLE PRODUCTS. THE BAN WAS SCHEDULED TO TAKE EFFECT ON SEPTEMBER 6, 1978.

2. ON AUGUST 18, THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON MADE FORMAL REPRESENTATIONS TO BOTH MR. TERRY L. LEITZELL, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR FISHERIES NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION, AND MR. LYNN A. GREENWALT, DIRECTOR, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, RUGING THESE TWO USG AGENCIES TO RECONSIDER THEIR DECISION ON THE UNCLASSIFIED

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MARICULTURE EXEMPTION AND SUSPEND TEMPORARILY THE BRINGING INTO EFFECT OF THE RULING ON GREEN SEA TURTLES INSOFAR AS IT PROHIBITS TRADE IN MARJJCULTURE TURTLE PRODUCTS. THE BRITISH EMBASSY NOTED HMG'S SUPPORT OF AND SUMMARIZED THE CASE PRESENTED BY CAYMAN TURTLE FARM LTD., OFFERED ASSISTANCE IN ARRANGING A VISIT TO THE FARM BY EXPERTS FROM THE NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE AND FISH AND WILDLIKE SERVICE, STRESSED HOW SERIOUSLY HMG AND THE GOVERNMENT OF

THE CAYMAN ISLANDS VIEW THE ACTIONS OF THE USG AGENCIES INVOLVED AND REQUESTED URGENT AND SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION OF THE APPEAL FOR A STAY OF THIS BAN.

3. EMBASSY WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO REVIEW THE HISTORY OF THE LISTING NOR EVEN THE MERITS OF AN EXEMPTION FOR MARICULTURE OPERATIONS - THE ONLY POINT AT ISSUE HERE - IN THE BELIEF THAT CAYMAN TURTLE FARMS LTD. AND NOW HMG HAVE ARGUED THE CASE THOROUGHLY. WE HAVE BEEN ASKED, HOWEVER, TO BRING THIS MATTER TO THE ATTENTION OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO ENSURE THAT (A) THE EFFORTS AND SUCCESS TOWARD COMPLETE SELF-SUSTAINED CLOSED-CYCLE FARMING OPERATIONS BY CAYMAN TURTLE FARM LTD. (CTF) ARE FAIRLY EVALUATED AS WELL AS (B) THE EXONOMIC CONSEQUENCES TO THE CAYMANIAN ECONOMY SHOULD AN EXEMPTION FOR MARICULTURE OPERATION BE FINALLY REFUSED. RE (A): MR. W.A. JOHNSON DESCRIBED AS PARTICULARLY UNFAIR THE REFUSAL BY THE NATIONAL MARINE AND FISHERIES SERVICE/U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TO GIVE CTL THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW DATA SUBMITTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND AS ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AFTER THE CLOSING DATE FOR COMMENTS PUBLISHED IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER. RE (B): TOTAL VISIBLE CAYMANIAN EXPORTS FOR 1977 ARE ESTIMATED AT CI\$8,268,104, OF WHICH CI\$1,139,581 ARE ACCOUNTED FOR BY FOOD AND NON-FOOD PRODUCTS OF CTF. IN BRIEF, THIS IS THE ONE EXPORT INDUSTRY OF THE CAYMANS. ACCORDING TO CTF, ONE HALF OF THESE EXPORT SALES ARE TO THE USA BUT A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF THE REST TRANSITS THE USA EN ROUTE CANADA AND EUROPE.

4. EMBASSY REQUESTS (A) STATUTS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF UNCLASSIFIED

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"LISTING" AND BAN ON TRADE IN TURTLE PRODUCTS, ESPECIALLY AS REGARDS MARICULTURE OPERATIONS, AS WELL AS (B) INFORMATION ON USG REPLY TO HMG REPRESENTATIONS IN WASHINGTON. IRVING

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Disposition History: n/a
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